

HADRAT AYESHA

BINT ABU BAKR (R.A)

Daughter of Hadrat Abu Bakr and the most beloved wife of the Holy Prophet, Hadrat Ayesha was born in the fourth year of the declaration of the Prophethood by Hadrat Mohammad (SAW). Her name was Ayesha, her surname was Umm-e-Abdullah (*Mother of Abdullah*) and generally she was called Siddiqah (*The truthful*). Since she had no children, so she did not have any surname. A surname was a great honour in those days and people always wanted one. So Hadrat Ayesha once asked the Holy Prophet (SAW),

"O Prophet of Allah, other women have their surnames but I have none. Please suggest one for me".

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said, "Why don't you adopt the surname of Umm-e-Abdullah". Abdullah was the son of Hadrat Ayesha's sister.

Right from childhood, Hadrat Ayesha was extraordinarily intelligent. As a girl she was very jolly, pleasant mannered, and had a fantastic memory. Even in her old age she could recollect the most minute details of her childhood. When the Hijrah (*Migration of the Holy Prophet (SAW) from Makkah to Medina*) took place, she was hardly in her eighth or ninth year, but history had recorded a great number of traditions narrated by Hadrat Ayesha. No other companion (*One who had meetings with the Holy Prophet*) of the Holy Prophet had so many Ahadith to his or her credit.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) and Hadrat Abu Bakr (RA) had verbally declared each other as brother. In that society, such a verbal declaration was considered no less than the real relationship. But the marriage of the Holy Prophet with the daughter of Hadrat Abu Bakr (RA) proved that prohibition of marriage with brother's daughter only applies to blood relations.

After Hadrat Khadija's death, Hadrat Khaula, wife of Hadrat Othman (RA) inquired from the Holy Prophet, if he wanted to re-marry to dispel his grief.
The Holy Prophet asked Khaula. "Whom should I marry? Widow or Virgin".

"Both kind of women are available. Ayesha, daughter of Abu Bakr is a virgin and Saudaa daughter of Zama 'a is widow. Now it is up to you", Hadrat Khaula said.

Later, the Holy Prophet married both women. Earlier to her marriage with the Holy Prophet, Hadrat Ayesha (RA) was engaged to a non-Muslim. Her would-be in-laws declined to go for this marriage on the plea that Hadrat Ayesha's arrival in their family may make their son a Muslim too. And thus the engagement was broken. Hadrat Ayesha was then only six years old.

After settling down in Medina for some time, the Holy Prophet sent Hadrat Zaid, son of Harith and his servant Abu Raafe to Makkah for escorting Hadrat Ayesha (RA) to Medina. Hadrat Zaid and Raafe, were given five hundred dirhams and two camels as provision for the journey. Hadrat Ayesha was brought safely to Medina but the change of climate had adverse effects on her. She fell ill and lost her beautiful hair. After a prolonged illness, she recovered and gained weight. Then Hadrat Abu Bakr asked the Holy Prophet (SAW) "Why don't you take Ayesha to your home? The Nikah (*The ritual of marriage ceremony. It includes recitation of Holy verses and distribution of sweets etc.*) has already been announced".

"I am helpless, I don not have the money to pay Mehr (*Mehr is the money which is obligatory on a Muslim to pay to his wife before consummation*), i.e. the downer money", the Holy Prophet (SAW) said. On hearing this, Hadrat Abu Bakr (RA) arranged five hundred dirhams on his own and presented the money to the Holy Prophet. The money was sent to Hadrat Ayesha (RA) by Hadrat Mohammad (SAW) and Hadrat Ayesha (RA) was brought to the Holy Prophet's house in the month of Shawwal (*Tenth month of Islamic calendar year*) of the first year of Hijrah.

At the time of Hadrat Ayesha's birth, the house of Hadrat Abu Bakr (RA) was already illuminated with the light of Islam and had kindled a great love of Islam in Hadrat Ayesha's heart. This love constantly grew after her marriage with the Holy Prophet (SAW). Resultantly, she played a significant role as wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Many controversial and significant incidents are attributed to her life, such as Ifk (*Ifk : Incident relating to allegation of adultery on Hadrat Ayesha (RA) and Allah's verdict about the matter*) Eila (Eilla : *Incident of abstinence of the Holy Prophet (SAW) from his wives*), Tehreem (*Tehreem : Incident relating to abstinence of the Holy Prophet from eating honey*) and Thakh'eer (*Takh'eer : The incident of option given to the wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to continue marital bond or choose divorce*).

Ifk:

The details of the incident of *Ifk* are briefly as follows:

Once Hadrat Ayesha (RA) was accompanying the Holy Prophet (SAW) in a caravan. During the journey, the caravan stopped for a night's stay. Hadrat Ayesha (RA) went out of her camp to relieve her self and lost her precious necklace somewhere in the way. As she came to know of this loss, she started searching her lost necklace. In the meantime, the caravan moved on its journey. Hadrat Ayesha did not know that the caravan has moved. When she came back to her camp, she found the caravan had moved and she was left alone. She wrapped herself in a cloth sheet and waited to be

rescued. Soon she was approached by Safwan son of Mauttal, whose duty was to trial behind the caravan to collect the left overs and to join the caravan afterwards. He recognized Hadrat Ayesha and asked her to mount on his camel while he walked alongside. By noon, they joined the caravan.

This incident provided a golden opportunity to the mischief-mongers and they created a lot of misconception. These hypocrites (*Hypocrites: People who had embraced Islam under social compulsion and were non-believers at their hearts. These people always conspired against Islam to subvert it from within*) started a malicious propaganda against Hadrat Ayesha and accused her of adultery. This dirty propaganda built such a pressure that the Holy Prophet (SAW) was compelled to send Hadrat Ayesha to her parent's house for some time. The Holy Prophet (SAW) was approached in this matter for reconciliation. But he said, "If Ayesha is innocent, Allah will defend her". So the matter was left there for quite a few days until Allah vindicated Hadrat Ayesha of this false accusation and the Holy Prophet's prediction proved true. In Surah (*A chapter of the Holy Quran*) *Al-Noor*, Allah confirmed the innocence of Hadrat Ayesha (RA).

This happened when the Holy Prophet had gone to see Hadrat Ayesha at her parent's place. The Holy Prophet, after the revelation, smilingly told Hadrat Ayesha that Allah had revealed her innocence and recited the verses of Surah *Al Noor*. Hadrat Ayesha's mother asked her, to get up and bow in thanks before the Holy Prophet (SAW).

"No I am only grateful to my Allah", promptly replied Hadrat Ayesha (RA).

Eila:

The incident of Eila is also quite important. It is said that the sustenance provided to the Holy Prophet's wives was insufficient. The provisions included foodgrains, dates etc. All the wives of the Holy Prophet unanimously complain about the inadequacy of the provisions. The Holy Prophet (SAW) showed his displeasure. Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar beseeched their daughters not to press for increase in the provisions but the other wives continued their demand. At last the Holy Prophet (SAW) decided not to have any relations with his wives for a month. He shifted to a separate room away from his wives for many days. It created a great stir in the people and they thought that the Holy Prophet has divorced his wives. Hadrat Umar sought the Holy Prophet's interview on this point. Twice, the request was disallowed. On the third time Hadrat Umar was allowed to visit the Holy Prophet. Hadrat Umar found the Holy Prophet lying on a rough and bare cot, which had left marks on his body. Earthen utensils were lying astray on the floor. On watching this scene, Hadrat Umar was overcome with grief. He asked.

"O Prophet of Allah, Have you divorced your wives?"

"No" the Holy Prophet said.

Hadrat Umar broke this news to the people. The month was of twenty-nine days and the Holy Prophet (SAW) came out of his isolated room and returned to his wives. Hadrat Ayesha was the first one to be visited.

Tehr'eem:

This incident will be dealt with at length in the life sketch of Hadrat Hafsa.

Takh'eer:

This incident is reported in history as follows:

Once the Holy Prophet (SAW) came to Hadrat Ayesha and said,

"You may consult your parents and then give a reply to my question".

"What is that question", Hadrat Ayesha asked.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) recited the following verses from Surah *Ahzab* of the Holy Quran:

"O, Prophet, tell your wives that if they are more tempted to this world's life and mundane comforts, then let me forsake you without any trouble and if you crave for Allah, the Prophet and the Hereafter then there is a great reward for virtuous women".

On hearing this, Hadrat Ayesha said,

"O Prophet of Allah, why should I consult my parents. I prefer Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter over all mundane comforts".

The Holy Prophet was pleased with Hadrat Ayesha's reply and said that he will put the same question to all his wives. Hadrat Ayesha requested that her reply may not be disclosed to others. The Prophet agreed and repeated that same question to all of his wives and all of them said that Hadrat Ayesha had said previously. The above mentioned verses from the Holy Quran are called the verses of Takh'eer.

The Holy Prophet had a great love for Hadrat Ayesha. This fact can be substantiated by one of his sayings;

"O, Allah, the things which are in my control (*i.e. justice and equality between different wives*) I always do justice (with them), but forgive me for that which is beyond my control (*i.e. my love with Ayesha*)".

There is another of his quotations, Hadrat 'Amr bin Al-'Aas once asked the Holy Prophet:

"O, Prophet of Allah whom do you love the most".

"Ayesha", he replied.

"And whom do you love the most among the men", 'Amr bin A'-Aas further asked.

"Her father" (*Hadrat Abu Bakr*), the Holy Prophet said.

The same degree of love existed in Hadrat Ayesha's heart for the Holy Prophet (SAW). Sometimes it happened that Hadrat Ayesha was awakened during the night and did

not find the Holy Prophet (SAW) by her side and she was perturbed. One night, Hadrat Ayesha did not find the Holy Prophet on his bed. She tried to trace him here and there, and thought perhaps he had gone to one of his other wives, but found him offering prayers. This shamed her and she said,

"My parents be scarified for you (*An Arabic expression of love*). I was thinking of something else and you are busy in something else."

Her love for the Holy Prophet can be gauged by the fact that the last dress on his body before death was always kept in safe custody by Hadrat Ayesha afterwards. She was quite young in age at the time of marriage, so quite often it happened that Hadrat Ayesha cooked food for the Holy Prophet (SAW) and lay asleep near the fire place and was awakened by the Holy Prophet (SAW) on his return to home.

Hadat Ayesha was only eighteen years old at the time of the Holy Prophet's death. The Holy Prophet remained ill for thirteen days until he breathed his last. During these days, he spent eight days with Hadrat Ayesha and five days with other wives. He died in Hadrat Ayesha's room. After death the Holy Prophet (SAW) Hadrat Ayesha lived forty-eight years as widow.

After only two years, Hadrat Abu Bakr followed the Holy Prophet to meet him in Paradise, and thus Hadrat Ayesha was a widow and an orphan too. Hadrat Abu Bakr the first Caliph was buried by the side of the Holy Prophet's grave. She was only twenty at that time. Hadrat Umar was elected second caliph at the death of Hadrat Abu Bakr and he sanctioned a stipend of ten thousand dirhams per annum each for the widows of the Holy Prophet (SAW) but Hadrat Ayesha was granted a stipend of twelve thousand dirhams per annum.

Hadrat Umar explained this discrimination as follows:

"Since she was dearer to the Holy Prophet, she deserves more".

At his death bed Hadrat Umar sent his son to Hadrat Ayesha with a request for being buried by the side of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Hadrat Ayesha replied, "I had chosen this place as my grace but I would sacrifice it for Umar".

Although Hadrat Ayesha had granted permission for the burial of Hadrat Umar in her room, Hadrat Umar even then advised his son in his last will, "Take my bier to the door of Hadrat Ayesha. If she allows, bury me inside, otherwise take me to the common graveyard of Muslims".

Hadrat Ayesha allowed the burial and so the Holy Prophet (SAW), Hadrat Abu Bakr and Hadrat Umar were buried in the same room. This act proves her good, and magnanimous nature.

Hadrat Ayesha was slim during her youth but later she gained weight. She had a fair complexion. She was a very beautiful woman. Her favorite dress was a red shirt and a

black wrapper. She was so contented that she never had more than one dress and used it by washing it again and again. She was a true follower of Shariah.

She exhorted children to do good deeds and to be modest and bashful. She was very obedient to the Holy Prophet (SAW). She was such a strict follower of *purdah* that once Ishaq who was blind came to meet Hadrat Ayesha she observed *purdah*. On this Ishaq said, "Why are you observing *purdah*. I cannot see you".

"I can see you, even if you do not see me," Hadrat Ayesha replied.

She was never greedy and remained contented for the whole of her life on the meagre belongings she had. It is reported that once she said, "After the death of the Holy Prophet (SAW), I never ate my fill, whenever I do so, tears come to my eyes".

"But why?", somebody asked.

"Because till his death, the Holy Prophet (SAW) never had enough food or meat to satisfy his appetite". Hadrat Ayesha replied.

Her love for the Holy Prophet can further be visualized by another incident. Once she got angry with Abdullah son of Hadrat Zubair and swore that she would never speak to him. Abdullah apologized and asked for pardon. She was adamant till the maternal relatives of the Holy Prophet (SAW) pleaded for the acceptance of Abdullah's apology. On this, she wept and said, "You are the relatives of the Holy Prophet (SAW). I submit to this recommendation".

This meant violation of her oath so she released forty slaves as Kaffara (*Monetary compensation for violation of oath*).

Once she was fasting and only one loaf was available at the time of Iftar to break her fast. A beggar came and she offered that loaf to him breaking her fast with water. She regularly offered the prayer of Ishraq (*A prayer offered before noon*). The Holy Prophet (SAW) had offered this prayer only once but Ayesha made it a point to offer it regularly. According to her, "The Holy Prophet possessed many virtues and did good deeds but did not observe them regularly, lest these prayer or other acts of virtue are taken as obligatory for posterity".

The Holy Prophet (SAW) used to stand long in the prayer of Tahajjud (*A prayer offered before noon*). Hadrat Ayesha always gave company to the Holy Prophet in offering Tahajjud. Sometimes the prayer lasted for the whole night.

She was most forgiving. She had no grudge even against her enemies. Her brother Mohammad son of Abu Bakr was murdered by Muavia son of Khadija but she pardoned him.

She showed due regard for the status and ranks of persons. Once a beggar came and asked him to leave. Soon after, a well clad traveler came and said that he was hungry, she offered him a seat and food. The people objected to this difference in

behaviour but she explained, "The Holy Prophet (SAW) had said that people should be dealt with according to their rank and merit".

Hadrat Ayesha was generous and beneficent. Once Abu Zubair sent her one hundred thousand dirhams as gift. Hadrat Ayesha was observing fast that day. She immediately distributed all the money among the needy. In the evening, at the time of Iftar, her maid servant remarked, "O, Mother of the faithful you could have saved some money for buying some food for Iftar".

"Oh, why didn't you remind me at that time," she replied.

She was God-fearing and kind-hearted. Some misconceptions led the events in such a way that she fought a battle against the fourth Caliph Hadrat Ali (RA). This battle is called 'The battle of Camel' (*Hadrat Ayesha was riding a camel in the battle*). She always repented this action for whole of her life. Whenever she recalled her participation in this battle, she used to weep and say, "I wish I could be dead twenty years ago".

By being a kind-hearted woman, it does not prove that she was a coward. She frequently visited the graveyard during the night to offer *Fatihah* (*Prayer of Muslims offered for pardoning the sins of the dead*).

In the battle of Khandaq (*Battle fought at Madina in which a deep circular trench was dug around Medina as defence against the enemy*) the Muslims were surrounded and besieged by the enemy. The danger of sabotage from Jews living in Medina was also imminent, but fearlessly she surveyed the battlefield in the open, many a times. In the battle of Uhud, (*Battle fought with Meccans near the mountain of Uhud situated between Medina and Mekkah*), she nursed the wounded and supplied water in the battlefield to soldiers.

She possessed many virtues. Because of her virtues and religious merits, she was considered better than all the male and female companions of the Holy Prophet. She excelled in knowledge, intelligence and intimacy with the Holy Prophet (SAW) more than anyone but her father. There are many incidents which prove her superiority over others.

She once said herself, "I have ten qualities which give me preference over the rest of the Holy Prophet's wives:

I am the only virgin married to the Holy Prophet (SAW).

I am the only wife whose parents both father and mother, undertook migration for the cause of Islam.

Allah, Himself vindicated my position and declared me innocent when I was accused. Gabriel came to the Holy Prophet while personifying as Ayesha and asked him to marry me.

Many a time, the Holy Prophet offered prayers while I was before him.
At the time of divine revelation, I used to be with him.
When the soul of the Holy Prophet left his body his head was on my chest.
I and the Holy Prophet (SAW) while bathing took water from one container.
The Holy Prophet (SAW) passed away in the night when he was visiting my house (*The Holy Prophet (SAW) visited his wives turn by turn*).
My house was blessed to become the burial place of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

Others Opinion about Hadrat Ayesha

The books of History and Hadith prove that there is no other Prophet's wife having so many virtues. The Holy Prophet (SAW) had said that, "Ayesha is superior to other women as *thareed* (*A kind of dish prepared in Arabic*) is superior to other foods".

Masrooq *Tabe 'yi* (*Those who enjoyed the company of the companions of the Holy Prophet but could not see or meet the Holy Prophet (SAW)*) said, "I have seen many companions of the Holy Prophet (SAW) asking Hadrat Ayesha for the solution of difficult religious questions in the light of the Shariah".

Imam Zohri said, "**The knowledge of Hadrat Ayesha is better than the accumulative knowledge of all Muslims and wives of the Holy Prophet (SAW)**". Once Hadrat Abu Musa Ahr'ari said, "We, the people who had once enjoyed the company of the Holy Prophet, never hesitated in asking the correct religious interpretations from Hadrat Ayesha and she always promptly guided us".

Urvah son of Zubair said, "**She was excellent in religious logic, medicine and poetry. She had a fantastic memory. Many a times, she recited rhymes of more than a hundred verses**". Abu Salma (*Son of Abdur Rehman Bin Auf*) had said.

"**I have never seen a better scholar of Sunnah (Saying of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his deeds), blessed with insight of Islamic jurisprudence, than her. She knew the interpretation of divine revelations and holy verses**".

A quotation of Ata bin Abu-Rabah goes like this:

"Ayesha was a great theologian, better Muslim and a remarkable thinker".

History quotes incident, that once Hadrat Muavia asked his companions, "Who is the greatest theologian of our times".

"No, other than you sir", the courtiers replied.

"No! can you make this statement on an oath?"

"No Muavia! the truth is that there is none like Hadrat Ayesha", one of them said.

No doubt, being the most beloved wife of the Holy Prophet (SAW), Hadrat Ayesha enjoyed the best opportunity of imbibing knowledge and guidance from the Holy Prophet. But there were many others, who also had similar affinity with the Holy Prophet (SAW) but the genius of Hadrat Ayesha interpreted and explained the divine message and the Holy Prophet's actions in the most befitting manner. Rest of the people lagged behind. She could penetrate into the depths of a problem instantly while others could not.

Hadrat Ayesha had a logical mind. Normally, it is seen that the people having a practical mind are more prone to atheism and disbelief in religion, and, because of the habit of rationalizing every problem, fall easy prey to worldly theories. But Hadrat Ayesha, although a great intellectual, had much knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence and love for Islam. The polluted concept of religion, then prevailing in Arabia, was full of superstitions. The common people used amulets, charms and witchcraft to dispel mishaps and solve their problems. The women of those times zealously followed these practices. Hadrat Ayesha detested superstition since only Allah is competent to punish or reward anybody. She fought relentlessly against all these social evils. Once she saw a razor (*It was a sort of 'Charm' having recourse to some deity*) placed by the side of a child's bed. She was very angry, and forbade this practice saying, "The Holy Prophet was against all superstitious charms, amulets and witchcrafts".

The above incident throws a glowing light upon the progressive orientation of Islam. Only ignorant people fall prey to such superstitions. These superstitions lead a Muslim into the depths of disbelief in Allah. A true Muslim believes that good or evil only comes from Allah and none else. Women should be most careful and should not succumb to superstitions.

Hadrat Ayesha has reported more than 2,250 Ahadith (*Sayings of the Holy Prophet (SAW), plural of Hadith*). She lived for sixty-three years. She hated flattery and avoided meeting with flatterers. While she was suffering from her last illness (*She died in same illness*), Abdullah Bin Abbas requested the permission to visit her which she declined, because she knew that he will start flattering her. On the insistence of her nephews she allowed Abdullah, who started praising her qualities the moment he arrived. She immediately said, "Ibn-e-Abbas leave me and do not try to flatter. I swear on Allah, I wish, I would have been a stone".

The greatness of Hadrat Ayesha can be judged by the fact that whenever someone visited her during her fatal illness, invariably she said, "All praises are for Allah, I am fine".

Hadrat Ayesha died during the rule of Hadrat Muavia in the month of Ramadan (*A month of fasting in Islamic Calendar*). That night, innumerable torches and lanterns were burning and the streets of Madina had such a great rush of women that it seemed like Eid (*A day of celebration of festivity for Muslims at the end of the month of fasting i.e. Ramadan*).

Ubaid bin Kumair asked a stranger that night, "Who is grieved due to Hadrat Ayesha's death?"

"Every body is sad to whom she was a mother, and she was mother of all the faithful", the stranger replied. She had made a will that she should be buried at night, so she was buried, in the night she died, after her funeral prayers in *Jannat-ul-*

Baqi' which witnessed unprecedented rush. Hadrat Abu Huraira led the funeral prayers. Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Abdur Rehman and Abdullah bin Abdur Rehman lowered her body into the grave. May Allah rest her soul in peace.